

The Quiet Ones

Guard the quiet ones—
the son whose pencil
touches the lines of his letters
ever so lightly,
the daughter whose doleful songs
weave within the ordinary
language of her speech.

Their hearts do not burn before us,
nor shine,
hard and definite
like children's pointed stars,
but blur within a smokey broth of sky.

Frugal, quick, their needs
are hints, whispers
at the corner of an eye.

They speak without punctuation,
what they say drops away
like an interrupted symphony.

Theirs is the faith of seeds,
seeds that sprout in the night
bothering our sleep:
What was it she wanted to say?
What did he mean?
What must I remember?

—Marilyn Bushman-Carlton